

SERMON SERIES *from NEW YORK TIMES* BEST-SELLING AUTHOR

————— ANDY ANDREWS —————

*The*  
TRAVELER'S GIFT



*Seven DECISIONS THAT DETERMINE*  
*PERSONAL SUCCESS*

*by* JAN *and* RICK LOY

SERMON



*THE JOYFUL DECISION:*

“TODAY I WILL CHOOSE  
TO BE HAPPY”

The Apostle Paul, writing from prison in Rome to believers in Philippi, encouraged his readers to follow his example in discipline, courage, faith, and joy. He understood great hardship, persecution, and all other manner of adversity in the human experience. Even so, he could confidently state he had learned to be content, regardless of the circumstances. Paul teaches us one of the most important life lessons for a believer: In Christ we can be happy, content, and calm in any/every season and situation life presents.

ADAPTED FROM *The TRAVELER'S GIFT*, by ANDY ANDREWS



Philippians 4:10-13

HAPPINESS IS A CHOICE BORN OF GRATITUDE, CONTENTMENT,  
AND GENUINE TRUST IN GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER ALL OF LIFE.

- Dictionaries describe happiness as a mental and emotional state of well-being and contentment.

1. Everyone has an idea of what it is, and most everyone wants it.
2. By observation of the current culture, relatively few seem to possess it.

- Happiness is an individual, internal, and truly spiritual choice, not a defined set of particular tangible benefits or advantages.

1. Happiness is available to all because it is not contingent upon external factors, such as possessions, position, or economic status.

2. As such, shifts in thinking, perspective, and appetites may be needed for an individual to live in happiness.

3. It is not typically a “once for all” choice; the choice will be made often in a culture that militates against contentment.

CHRISTIAN HAPPINESS IS ENABLED BY LIVING IN LIGHT OF THREE  
ESSENTIAL BIBLICAL LIFE PRINCIPLES:

1. Practicing/expressing gratitude
2. Learning/living in contentment
3. Trusting in God's loving sovereignty

- Supporting quotes and texts:

1. *"Our very lives are fashioned by choice. First we make choices. Then, our choices make us."* —Anne Frank, from *The Traveler's Gift*

2. *"Being happy doesn't mean that everything is perfect. It means that you've chosen to look beyond the imperfections."* —Unknown

3. *"Happiness cannot be traveled to, owned, earned, worn, or consumed. Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace, and gratitude."* —Dr. Denis Waitley

4. *"How simple it is to see that we can only be happy now, and there will never be a time when it is not now."* —Gerald Jampolsky

5. Esther 8:16; Psalm 1; Ecclesiastes 2:26; Matthew 25:21, 23; Philippians 4:4

## LIFE PRINCIPLE ONE: PRACTICING/EXPRESSING GRATITUDE – HEBREWS 13:15

- Definitions:

1. Practicing: actively pursuing and carrying out a discipline or way of life
2. Expressing: to speak thoughts or feelings in words, to convey meaning in observable behavior and attitude
3. Gratitude: the mental/emotional state of being grateful, thankful, and appreciative for God's presence, provisions, and blessings

- Cultivate daily gratitude:

1. Regularly write down that for which you are grateful.

2. Notice three things each day for which you are grateful.
3. Intentionally rehearse God's kindness and blessings— Psalm 103
4. Humbly recognize that every good gift comes from God— James 1:17
5. Recognize that you are wealthy by all earthly and Heavenly standards—Ephesians 1:3
6. Discipline thoughts daily to focus on what you have rather than what you do not have; thinking on the "good things"—Philippians 4:8
7. Choose/use words that reflect a grateful and humble heart; Ephesians 4:29-32; Philippians 2:14-15; I Thessalonians 5:16-18

- By repetition and discipline, build a grateful heart, which supports happiness:  
*"a mental and emotional state of well-being and contentment."*

- Supporting quotes and texts:

1. *"There is no such thing as gratitude unexpressed. If it is unexpressed, it is plain, old-fashioned ingratitude."* —Robert Brault

2. *"The unthankful heart...discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day and, as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find, in every hour, some heavenly blessings!"*  
 —Henry Ward Beecher

3. *"He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has."* —Epictetus

4. *"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."*  
 —William Arthur Ward

5. Psalm 100; Psalm 136:1; Lamentations 3:23; Romans 8:28; Hebrews 12-28

## LIFE PRINCIPLE TWO: LEARNING/LIVING IN CONTENTMENT – PHILIPPIANS 4:10-13

What is contentment? A state or feeling of calm satisfaction and serenity.

The concept is almost absent from our culture as a whole. Stress, worry, anxiety, and dissatisfaction seem to be the norm, and those who enjoy contentment are either envied or thought "out of touch with reality."

- For the believer, contentment grows directly from genuine gratitude to God.

1. For the assurance of salvation in Christ Jesus
  2. For the profoundly simple gifts of life, provision, and opportunity
  3. For the additional blessings beyond basic needs
  4. For adversity, because it is God's university for training us in righteousness
  5. For God's promises to meet all our needs – Matthew 6:33; Philippians 4:19
  6. For the overarching reality that in all these things we find proof of our place in the family of God that our Father loves us and acts in our best interests
- Developing the discipline of contentment (it is also a choice)
    1. Define what matters truly matters in life – Ecclesiastes 1:14
    2. Determine what lasts forever, and what doesn't – Philippians 3:12-16
    3. Write these things down; review them every day
    4. When desire, discontent, or envy assail you read I Timothy 6.
    5. Begin and end every day with expressed gratitude to God.
  - Supporting quotes and texts:
    1. *"God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him."* —John Piper
    2. *"Real contentment must come from within. You and I cannot change or control the world around us, but we can change and control the world within us."* —Warren Wiersbe
    3. *"If my life is surrendered to God, all is well. Let me not grab it back, as though it were in peril in His hand but would be safer in mine!"* —Elizabeth Elliot
    4. *"God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you."* —Augustine
    5. Romans 8:31; II Corinthians 12:10; I Timothy 6:6-8; Hebrews 13:5-6

## LIFE PRINCIPLE THREE: TRUSTING IN GOD'S LOVING SOVEREIGNTY

*Definition: The Sovereignty of God is the biblical truth that all things and all people are under God's rule and control and that nothing happens without His direction or permission. God works all things according to the counsel of His own will. His purposes are all-inclusive and never thwarted; nothing takes Him by surprise. The sovereignty of God means God has the power and right to govern all things and that He does so always and without exception. God is sovereign in both principle and practice.*

1. Psalm 103:19; 115:3; 135:5-6; Isaiah 46:10-11; Daniel 4:34
2. Ephesians 1:11; I Timothy 6:15; Revelation 19:16

- His sovereignty assures our security in accordance with His purposes and plans; we have the most trustworthy basis for choosing happiness each day.
- We deprive ourselves of great comfort, confidence, and certainty when we neglect the profound impact of the sovereignty of God.
- Supporting quotes and texts:

1. *"If there is one single molecule in this universe running around loose, totally free of God's sovereignty, then we have no guarantee that a single promise of God will ever be fulfilled."* —R.C. Sproul, *Chosen by God*

2. *"God is the Lord of human history and of the personal history of every member of His redeemed family."* —Margaret Clarkson, *Grace Grows Best in Winter*

3. *"Before me, even as behind, God is, and all is well."* —John Greenleaf Whittier

4. *"In the greatest difficulties, in the heaviest trials, in the deepest poverty and necessities, He has never failed me; but because I was enabled by His grace to trust Him He has always appeared for my help. I delight in speaking well of His name."* —George Muller

5. Psalm 103:19; 115:3; 135:5-6; Isaiah 46:10-11; Daniel 4:34; Ephesians 1:11; I Timothy 6:15; Revelation 19:16

CONCLUSION: The Choice to be Happy becomes reality when built upon Gratitude, Contentment, and Trust in God's Sovereignty. And that choice opens doors to joy and peace beyond description.

